



h i l i g h t s

A MAGAZINE FOR HISTON & IMPINGTON



A pink Christmas?

It doesn't have to be Barbie | p14

Christmas countdown

A village diary for the festive season | p5

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AS EASY AS PIE!
| p25-26



THE CHRISTMASSES
in Histon | p19

ISSN 2976-7407



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HI HUB highlights

Issue 02, Christmas 2023

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Tues 28 Nov, 7pm
Thurs 30 Nov, 7pm
Fri 1 Dec, 7pm
Sat 2 Dec, 2pm
Tues 5 Dec 7pm
Weds 6 Dec, 7pm
Thurs 7 Dec, 7pm
Fri 8 Dec, 7pm
Sat 9 Dec, 2pm
Mon 11 Dec, 7pm
Tues 12 Dec, 7pm
Thurs 14 Dec, 7pm



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Christmas diary

Countdown to Christmas

It's the time of year when many of the village's groups, stores and hospitality venues give the community a warm and very Christmassy welcome to their special festive events. Browse the calendar and make sure you don't miss out on some of the treats in store on our very own doorstep.



Wednesday 22 November

Late night Christmas shopping

Histon High Street (6pm – 9pm)

and

Opportunity Playgroup Christmas Fair

Saint Andrew's Centre (7pm)

Come along to find Christmas gift ideas galore, including crafts, sweet treats, hampers, gifts, books, soaps and a nearly new stall, as well as a raffle, tombola and much more.

See page 7 'Shop Local' for more details of both events.

Saturday 25 November

Histon Handmade contemporary design and craft fair

Saint Andrew's Centre (midday – 7pm)

23 leading local artists, designers and makers have been carefully selected to take part in this popular contemporary craft fair, where high quality work is on show and for sale.

Items include jewellery, glass and ceramics, handwoven baskets, illustrated books, prints, painting, calligraphy, and wood carving. Histon and Impington contributors include Sarah Vigliotti (printing), Daniela Stief (ceramics), Twyla Holland AKA the Cambridge Quill (calligraphy), Helena Perry (painting and illustration) and Sue Smith (watercolour). Free entry.

www.histonhandmade.com



Histon Methodist Church Christmas Fair

(9.30am – 12.30pm)

Take a break from the Saturday morning shopping to enjoy some Christmas gifts and refreshments.

Sunday 26 November

Histon Baptist Church pudding event

(7pm – 9.30pm)

Back by popular demand, this ticketed event offers a festive night out making Christmas pudding together, drinking mulled wine, taste-testing Christmas treats, browsing Christmas stalls, and hearing about the true meaning of Christmas.

www.histonbaptist.org.uk



Friday 1 December

Impington Music Society at Christmas

IVC, Brackenbury Room (7.30pm)

A joyous celebration of Folk Music from Latin America. The all-woman Frida-Violetta Band, featuring voice, guitar, cello, bass and percussion, will help blow away any autumn blues and get your feet tapping in the run-up to Christmas. Tickets on the door. £10 (£5 for 18 and unders), cash only.

Email impingtonmusicsoc@gmail.com for more details.



Friday 1 December

'Murder in the Library' interactive theatre

Histon Library (7.30pm – 9.30pm)

A story character has been found erased - murdered! Who could have done such a terrible thing? Stories are starting to unravel and characters are vanishing before our eyes!

Two famous characters leave the safety of their books to help you sleuth for clues at this interactive murder mystery theatre event. Adults and children 12+. Pay what you think (£2/£4/£6/£8/£10).

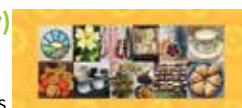
www.library.live



Histon Country Market

Histon Baptist Church (9am – midday)

Histon Country Market will be giving the community the chance to buy direct from the producer at their weekly event, with stall holders offering regular and seasonal fare, and gifts with a Christmas twist. Other market dates are 8 and 15 December.



Saturday 2 December

Moonlight Mandolin orchestra

Histon Baptist Church (7.30pm)

Histon is home to the Moonlight Mandolin Orchestra, one of the UK's leading orchestras for plucked instruments, featuring mandolins, mandolas, guitars and bass. Founded in the village some 20 years ago, the ensemble will be delighting the community this Christmas with a mixed programme of festive arrangements plus some items from the CD recorded in the summer, which will be launched at the performance. Adults £10, Concessions £7, age 12 and under free.

www.moonlightmandolins.org



Big Christmas Tidy-up

H&I Litter Pickers (from 9am)

Histon & Impington Litter Pickers, who volunteer to tidy up the village ready for the festivities, will be served complimentary mince pies, cake and coffee at the Red Lion after the Big Tidy-up.

New volunteers

email cedric.jl.foster1944@btinternet.com



Christmas Extravaganza

Bramley Court Care Home (from 3pm)

Hand feeding live reindeer and a ride on Santa's sleigh (trishaw) are just two of the events on offer, together with live entertainment by Caxton Swing jazz band and warming seasonal refreshments. As night falls, the Christmas lights will be turned on and there will be carol singing for all.

See page 21 for more details.

Continued on next page ►►

Christmas diary

Saturday 2 December

Royal British Legion Christmas Craft Fair

(11am – 4pm) including

H&I Model Railway Club display

The Histon & Impington Model Railway Group will be exhibiting their scale model of Histon Railway Station at this community event at the RBL in Saffron Road. Local craft makers and traders will be selling their Christmas wares. Free entry.



Family Hub Christmas Crafts session

Saint Andrew's Centre (10am – 11.30am)

HI Friends Family Hub will be running Christmas-themed wellbeing craft activities for school-aged children, giving parents a chance to chat and relax.

Sunday 3 December

'Aladdin' with the Cambridge Soft Play Company

Royal British Legion

(sessions at 9am, 10.30am, 12pm, 1.30pm and 3pm)

Kawaii Kubs is bringing this special Christmas play session to the village, with activities suitable for 0–5s.

Email emily@kawaiikubs.co.uk for details.

Thursday 7 December

Holiday at Home Christmas Concert

Histon Baptist Church (2.30pm)

All are welcome at the Holiday at Home Christmas Concert of classic Christmas favourites featuring Naomi Rogers, who performed at this event in 2022, and special guests Park Primary School Choir. Transport to the concert is available and tickets (£8) are on sale at Topiary Tree.

Contact Helen Blake helen@hifriends.org.uk or 07384 173430.

Friday 8 December

Choir 2000 Christmas concert

Histon Baptist Church (7.45pm)



With the boundless energy of musical director Chloë Allison and a brilliant orchestra, Choir 2000 will be performing Bach's joyful Christmas work The Magnificat. There will be carols for choir and audience, and local choirs Ten Sing (Friday) and Chesterton Singers (Saturday) will be joining them. Mince pies during the interval will add a further festive dimension to the event. Tickets £12 – accompanied U16s free.

www.choir2000.org

Histon Country Market

Histon Baptist Church (9am – midday)

See also Fridays 1 and 15 December.

Saturday 9 December

Choir 2000 Christmas concert

Histon Baptist Church (7.45pm)

See also Friday 8 December.

Sunday 10 December

Shine at Christmas

Saint Andrew's Centre (3pm)

This service for families, especially the under 5s, includes activities for younger children and is led by both the St. Andrew's churches.

Tuesday 12 December

Garden Club Christmas Quiz

Histon Methodist Church (7.30pm)

Test out your gardening knowledge and enjoy the festive nibbles at this end of year celebration. Teams of 4 to 6. Bring a friend or team up on the night.

Wednesday 13 December

Carols on the Green

Churches Together in Histon & Impington

(6pm – 7.30pm)

All are welcome to join in this annual tradition, singing carols beside the Christmas tree and under the Christmas lights on the Village Green. Familiar tunes but can't remember the words? Don't worry, there will be carol sheets available – so bring a torch!



Brian Ing

Friday 15 December

Histon Country Market

Histon Baptist Church (9am – midday)

See also Fridays 1 and 8 December.

Saturday 16 December

Farmer's Market

Histon Methodist Church (9am – midday)

A tempting selection of food for the Christmas table, including fruit and vegetables, fish, meat, cakes and confectionery, much of it grown, reared or made in the local area, will be on sale. Gift stalls include jewellery, handmade cards, plants and flowers, giving local residents the chance to shop local for Christmas.



Booze & Brushes

Saint Andrew's Centre (3pm)

For a fun Christmassy evening with friends, join a class that will be using acrylic paint to create their very own Santa Pallet. Art materials and aprons are included, but bring your own food and drink as there will be no bar. £35.

For details email paintingpassions@yahoo.com



Salvation Army Band and friends

Look out for the Band in the village leading up to Christmas, and why not ask them to play your favourite carol? The Salvation Army is also collecting donations of new toys and gifts for ages 0–17, to distribute to families in need. Drop them off from 20 to 30 November at the Care & Share Shop on the High Street.



Sunday 17 December

For more details of the villages' church services, see p 17

Christmas Carol Service

Histon Methodist Church (4.30pm)

Family Carol Service

Salvation Army (10.30am)

Family Nativity Service

Histon Baptist Church (10.30am)

Carols by Candlelight

Histon Baptist Church (6.30pm)

Carols by Candlelight

St Andrew's Impington (4pm)

Carols by Candlelight

St Andrew's Histon (7pm)

Messy Church

Salvation Army (4pm)



Elf Workshop

Royal British Legion (0 - 5 sessions at 9am, 10.30am, 12pm, 1.30pm, 3pm; 5 - 9 session 4.30pm to 5.30pm)

The younger members of the community get the chance to meet Santa at sessions for both the 0-5s and 5-9s.

Email emily@kawaiiikubs.co.uk

Monday 18 December

Dennis and Dave

Railway Vue (eve)

Gig featuring ex Iron Maiden/Manfred Mann guitarist Dennis Stratton and Dave Edwards.

Thursday 21 December

WI Christmas Celebration

Histon Methodist Church (7.30pm)

A bring and share supper with Christmas-themed activities. Visitors are warmly welcome.

Email hisimpwi@gmail.com for further information.

Christmas Eve, Sunday 24 December

For more details of the villages' church services, see p 17

Midnight Service

Histon Methodist Church (11.30pm)

Crib and Christingle Service

St Andrew's Impington (3pm)

Christingle Service

St Andrew's Histon (5pm)

Midnight Holy Communion

St Andrew's Histon (11pm)



Christmas Day, Monday 25 December

For more details of the villages' church services, see p 17

Morning service

Histon Methodist Church (10.30am)

A combined service led by Histon Methodist Church and the Salvation Army.

Christmas Day Holy Communion

St Andrew's Impington (9.30am)

Family service

Histon Baptist Church (10.30am)

Christmas Cracker Service

St Andrew's Histon (10.30am)

Shop Local for Christmas

Histon will be buzzing after-hours on Wednesday 22nd November as local traders welcome the community to 'Shop Local' for Christmas. Shops and pubs from one end of the village to the other will be open for Late Night Shopping through to 9pm. Christmas gifts, festive foods, and tasty treats and drinks to keep you going will all be for sale up and down the High Street and beyond.

Lucy Hill at Gin House Flowers has rallied local traders to join her in opening their doors into

the evening. She started the ball rolling by offering drinks, prizes, special offers and wreath designs that will be ready to pre-order at her High Street store.

Another must-visit destination will be the Christmas market at Saint Andrew's Centre, where Opportunity Playgroup will be offering crafts, sweet treats, hampers, gifts, books, soaps and a nearly new stall, as well as a raffle, tombola and much more. All their profits will go to support local children with disabilities, Impington Opportunity Playgroup and Cambridge Disabled Kids Swimming Club.

Other businesses participating include Histon Opticians, serving drinks and nibbles to clients new and old, who can stop by for free glasses adjustments and cleaning. The Boot is extending its happy hour for the evening and The Red Lion will be opening its outdoor bar.

There's a lot more besides! Participating traders confirmed as highlights went to press are:

- Christmas Market at Saint Andrew's Centre
- Estelle's
- Gin House Flowers
- Histon Chop Shop
- Histon Opticians
- Post Office
- Salvation Army Care and Share
- The Boot
- The Red Lion



Christmas door wreath at The Red Lion

Books and bins



Christmas bins

The first collection after Christmas will move back a day to the Saturday, and only blue bins will be collected that week.

	Black Bin	Blue Bin	Green Bin
Friday 17 November		✓	✓
Friday 24 November	✓		
Friday 1 December		✓	✓
Friday 8 December	✓		
Friday 15 December		✓	✓
Friday 22 December	✓		
Saturday 30 December		✓	
Friday 5 January	✓		
Friday 12 January		✓	✓
Friday 19 January	✓		

Milton Recycling Centre Christmas opening hours

	Saturday – Sunday	Closed
November	9am – 4pm	
December	9am – 4pm	24 December 25 December 26 December
January	9am – 4pm	1 January

Entrance gates shut 10 minutes before closing time | Site may close at dusk if earlier than scheduled closing time

Histon Library Christmas opening hours

The library will be closed on Monday 25, Tuesday 26 December and Monday 1 January, and normal Open+ Access hours will change over the Christmas period. To gain Open + Access customers must be library members and pre-register for this service with a member of staff, who will go through a safety induction to the building. Normal library services resume Tuesday 2 January 2024.

	Staffed	Open+ access
Christmas Eve (24 December)	Closed	Closed
Christmas Day (25 December)	Closed	Closed
Boxing Day (26 December)	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 27 December	Closed	10am – 4pm
Thursday 28 December	Closed	10am – 4pm
Friday 29 December	Closed	10am – 4pm
Saturday 30 December	Closed	10am – 4pm
New Year's Eve (31 December)	Closed	Closed
New Year's Day (1 January)	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 2 January onwards	Standard hours	



Christmas Tree chipping

The Parish Council is hoping to repeat last year's arrangements for chipping discarded Christmas trees in the village. Further information will be published on HI HUB when details are confirmed.

See www.hihub.info

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tawa.Lounge

With an exciting menu of international cuisine from small plates designed for sharing to dining plates, desserts and cocktails, Tawa Lounge offers a perfect setting for eating, drinking and socialising in the village.

As well as a stylish dining area for breakfast, lunch and dinner, there's an elegant new snug where people can meet throughout the day and enjoy our pastries and Cambridge-roasted coffee courtesy of local independent, The Brew Project. The expanded bar offers a wide range of quality draught beers and wines selected by Cambridge wine-merchants Noel Young.

BOOK NOW for your Christmas celebrations, either in our main restaurant or private dining area.

20 The Green •
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01223 613366

info@tawalounge.co.uk
tawalounge.co.uk
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Sun 10:00 – 16:00



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Wednesday 22 November 2023, 6.45pm – 8pm

Menopause explained — Menopause management advice, tips and tools

Dr Rosie Atterton, GP – Menopause Clinic will cover what menopause is, what symptoms women may experience and why, treatment options including healthy lifestyle, non-hormonal treatments and hormonal treatments HRT. Different HRT regimes. HRT benefits, risks and possible side effects.

Wednesday 13 December 2023, 6.45pm – 8pm

A gut feeling. All things relating to constipation, diarrhoea, abdominal pain and bloating.

Dr Sree Subramanian

Consultant Gastroenterologist

will cover a broad overview of the symptoms, conditions and treatments to aid good gut health.

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Email luke.wilson@spirehealthcare.com

Looking after you.



Photo: Christmas lights on The Green. ©Barry Starling

Christmas wishes to all

As 2023 ends, it is an ideal time for the Parish Council to review the year and thank all those who helped us with various projects during this time.

Our **Highways, Drainage & Formal Spaces Committee** has been working with County Council to shape a 20mph scheme that balances the needs of all highway users. This committee continued to support Speedwatch with new equipment - a special thank you to Andrew Boylett for his work here. They also collaborated with the Nature & Biodiversity Committee to add new plants to the banks along the Brook at the Green, and we would like to thank the volunteer waterers who helped these through dry weather. The Committee would also like to thank Colin Myles and Andrew Boylett for taking part in County Council road closure training, which is crucial for delivering many of our village events.

The **Nature & Biodiversity Committee** was part of the inaugural HI Eco Fest and 30-Day Challenge, a popular event that shared little lifestyle changes we can all make to have a positive impact on our environment. The Committee trialled a change of management of Manor Field into a hay meadow, with fewer cuts helping a greater range of plants and insects find a home here. Thank you to Dan

Mace for assisting with the planting of new trees granted to us by South Cambs District Council. Thanks also to Dave Dives, Jon Pavey, Alison Stuck and many others from Histon and Impington Green Spaces for botanical advice, providing help and inspiration. The Committee has also secured commitments to develop land management plans for nature recovery, finalise a net zero action plan and deliver an inventory of our current biodiversity, all of which will move forward in 2024.

The **Wellbeing, Recreation and Leisure Committee** have commissioned a master plan for the Recreation Ground to try to maximise the accessibility of sports to our residents, and a mechanical and energy review of the parish building to find ways of delivering sustainability. Many thanks to the sports team representatives and our grounds staff - Trevor Smith and Steve Campin - for their support of our wonderful Recreation Ground.

Our **Planning Committee** has continued to scrutinise planning applications both small and large. Thank you to all the residents who take time to comment on applications, or complete consultations, it really helps to inform decisions.

The **Finance, Governance and Legal Committee** and the **Employment and Transformation Committee** have been improving Council's processes and governance to support a welcome increase in the delivery of Council operations and new projects. A focus on development of a financial strategy, including rolling three-year plans, tied into

Council's goals, is improving our long-term planning and staff support. Together these improvements will ensure Council's increased pace, volume and scope of workload is sustainable, ensuring we deliver great things in 2024 and beyond.

And finally...

Congratulations to HI HUB on their successful launch of this magazine during the summer. Together with HI HUB and HI People, it provides a great platform for communication between the Council and residents. Many thanks to everyone who works on these publications.

Last, but by no means least, a huge thank you to our office team - Chelsea O'Brien, Theresa King and Amelia Luck - without whom none of this would have been possible.

Histon & Impington Parish Council wishes all **hilight**s readers and parish residents a happy holiday season. We hope many of you enjoy time with friends and family. Thank you to all those working in hospitality, care and other vital services during the festive season.

Best wishes for 2024!

Histon & Impington Parish Council

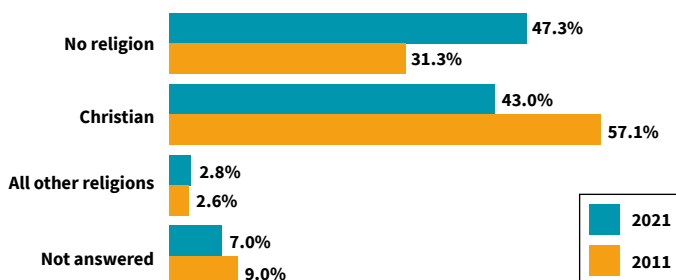
The Parish Office will be closed from 3pm Thursday 21st December reopening 9.30am Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

Village profile

Who are we?

Histon & Impington is a diverse village, home to people from very different backgrounds – not all of whom celebrate the Christian festival of Christmas. A comparison of the 2021 and 2011 census data offers an insight into our lives and provides revealing details of how the picture has changed over the past decade.

1 Christian faith



In 2021, people declaring 'no religion' outnumbered those who described themselves as 'Christian' while the opposite was true in 2011.

The proportion of Histon & Impington residents who declare 'no religion' is around 10% higher than the proportion in England and Wales as a whole (37%).

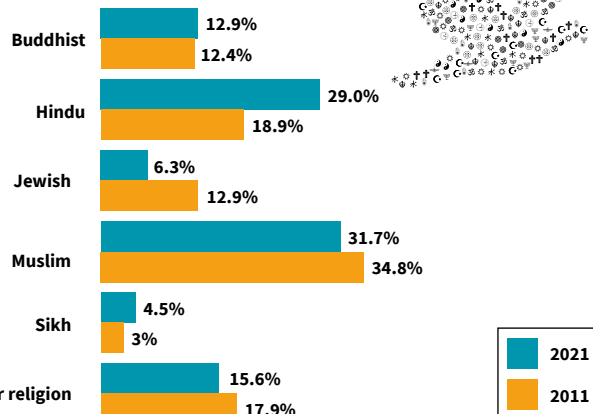
The number of Christians living in the village fell by 992 between 2011 and 2021 while the number who observe other religions grew by 23.

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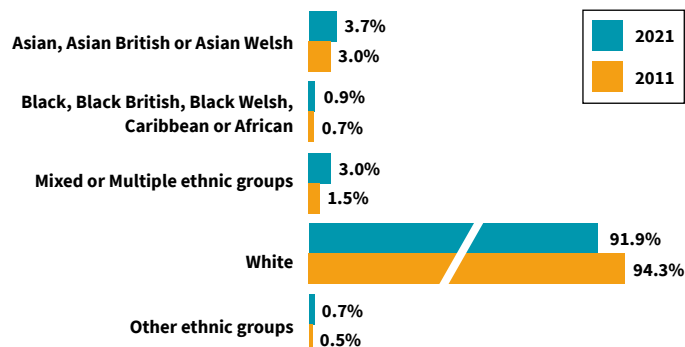
bb-fit.co.uk

2 Non-Christian religions



The Buddhist faith is the least common of these religions across England and Wales as a whole, but the Sikh faith is least common in Histon & Impington.

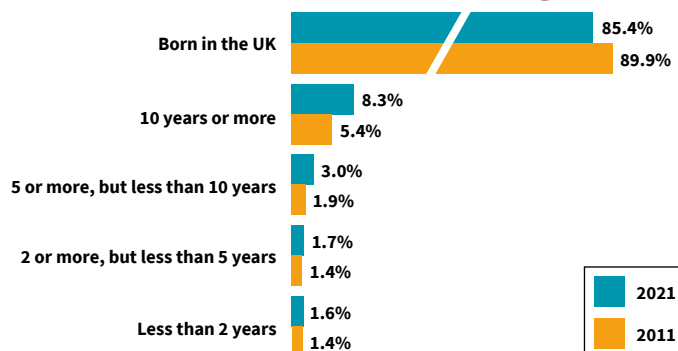
3 Ethnicity



Although Histon & Impington has become more ethnically diverse since 2011, we are still significantly less diverse than England and Wales as a whole, where 81.7% of the population was recorded as white in 2021.

Under the sub-categories recorded in the census, 19 different ethnic groups were represented in the village in 2021.

4 Length of residence in UK



The proportion of Histon & Impington residents who were born in the UK remains slightly higher than the figure for the country as a whole (83%).

CHRISTMAS

AT

The Red Lion

A beer house since 1836, the Red Lion continues to embrace its grain-led origins, including winning Cambridge CAMRA's Pub of the Year award. Throw in a freshly cooked pub menu, four modern en-suite bedrooms and a huge helping of community spirit and you'll find what's at the heart of our local.

Tucked away on the outskirts of Cambridge and proudly located in the ever-growing town of Histon, we offer a great spot to drink, eat or stay this Christmas.

BOOKABLE AREAS

THE BOTTLE ROOM

30 people seated or standing

Warm and inviting, this traditional and semi-private room will create the perfect venue for your Christmas celebration.



STAY WITH US

Our four modern, double rooms are quietly housed in our annexe, a short stroll across the garden, and offer the perfect location to rest your head after a good night of Christmas partying.



MENUS & PACKAGES

Take a look at our fantastic Christmas Menus and our range of curated packages here!



theredlionhiston.co.uk

27 High Street, Histon, CB24 9JD | 01223 564 437

I'm dreaming of a gender neutral Christmas

Nuwardalce on Visualhunt



Butterfly Princess Barbie (1994).

Mass media advertising will dictate the Christmas best seller list, but maybe our children deserve something more intriguing and less... pink, says Liz Hill.

Guess what will be the top-selling toy this Christmas? With heavy heart, I would put my money on it being Barbie, that ageless champion of age-old gender stereotypes. She first arrived in toy shops in 1959, either blonde or brunette, wearing a black-and-white striped swimsuit. She went on to top

most little girls' Christmas lists in the 60s, as did her Grand Designs home - the Barbie Dream House - complete with décor in the inevitable signature pink.

Her come-back three decades later saw her top the charts again in 1992 with 'Totally Hair Barbie', which sold more than 10 million dolls worldwide and became the best-selling Barbie of all time. And with the 2023 movie becoming the highest grossing film ever by a female director, if 'Blonde Barbie with Pink and White swimsuit, Tote Bag and Beach-themed Accessories' doesn't make this year's top Christmas seller list, I'll eat her matching Sun Hat.

Toys for boys?

However hard they try, retailers find little has changed in gender influences on toy choice. Sam Broad of Histon's Lighthouse Toys told me: "We have been selling toys for about 19 years and we never categorise or describe toys in terms of gender. We found it was very much up to each parent as to what they bought for their child and what they allowed their child to play with. Having said that, we have had adults refuse to buy a girl a toy car when they have asked us for suggestions. And we had some craft kits that were packaged in yellow boxes that didn't sell. When the manufacturer changed the packaging to pink and purple colouring they sold.

Top Toys for Christmas



Looking for Christmas present inspiration? Thanks to Histon's very own online toy shop, Lighthouse Toys, for their recommendations for top toys for Christmas 2023.

Find them at lighthouse toys.co.uk

Under 5s

- **Penguin Music Wobbler**
- **Look and Listen Sound Books** - superb new range of books (with an on/off button and replaceable batteries!)
- **Mr Wolf** - cooperative game. (Had very good feedback from a 3½ year old who wanted to play it every day)

5-7s

- **Stepping into Science** - 29 experiments
- **Roller Coaster Challenge** - build roller coasters to solve the logic problems
- **Ubongo Junior** - maths game for 1-4 players

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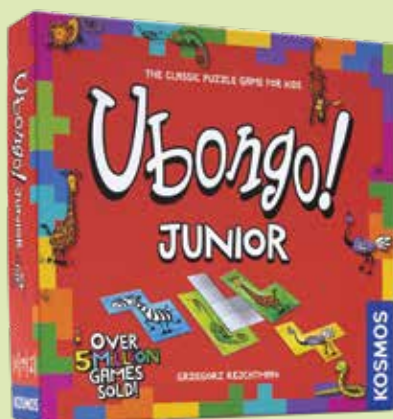
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“We have challenged parents at times. I always remember the dad pushing his toddler’s pushchair, who refused to buy his little boy a doll’s buggy as that was ‘for a girl’. The little boy was busy pushing a demo toy buggy around the shop. I said to the dad ‘but you are pushing his buggy around and you will want him to grow into a man who will push his child’s buggy.’ We purposely stock blue buggies as parents who do buy their boys one won’t usually buy a pink one!”

Good news

The good news is that buying a Barbie isn’t compulsory and there are plenty of other options that will delight on Christmas Day. Most of them aren’t pink.

8-12s

- **Q Ba Maze** marble runs – combines STEM with creativity
- **Rush Hour** – our best-selling logic puzzle for 19 years. Teens and adults also love trying to solve these puzzles
- **Chem C1000** – chemistry set. Ignite an interest in science with 125 experiments

Teens

- **Hollow Skewb Ultimate** – a twisty logic puzzle, similar but very different to Rubik’s cube.
- **Nanoblocks** – tiny building block sets
- **6 Nimmt** – superb card game also popular with adults

Adults

- **Star Path by Constantin** – wooden logic puzzle
- **Metal Earth** – model sets using laser cut metal sheets
- **Tantrix Game Pack** – superb value with 35 single player logic puzzles and two games. (Tim – owner of Lighthouse Toys - has spent hours solving the logic puzzles!)

Family Game

- **Brainbo** – family game invented by a man from Cambridge. It is a colourful, quickfire card game which takes minutes to explain but a lifetime to master. Only £12. Age 7 years - adult. 2-6 players.



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Celebrating the Christmas message

In Histon & Impington there is no shortage of options for those who would like to connect with the church at Christmas, says Liz Hill.

There's something special about going to church at Christmas. In 2019, before the pandemic took its toll on congregations across the country, more than 2.3 million people attended a Church of England Christmas service. This compares with an average weekly attendance of 783,000 people.

Of course, the Church of England is by no means the only destination for Christmas church-goers. The Baptist and Methodist churches and the Salvation Army also offer a warm welcome to Christians and non-Christians alike, and many people attend services in the village with their extended families in the run-up to Christmas and on the day itself.

Traditions

Whether it's the familiar carols, the welcoming family-friendly services or the comfort of a long-established family tradition, even people who don't declare a faith or have any connection with Christianity still value the opportunity to reflect a while on the meaning of Christmas.

Many people enjoy the chance to sing. Carolling dates back to the Middle Ages when people would go from house to house singing about Jesus's birth. Now, hundreds of years

later, people in Histon & Impington will gather to sing carols both outdoors on The Green and inside the churches. The Salvation Army and Histon Methodist Church will both be running all-age carol services, and candles will light up the services at Histon Baptist Church, and at St Andrew's in both Impington and Histon.

Family time

Then there are services aimed specifically at families. Shine at Christmas, a service with creative activities for younger children, is led by both the St Andrew's churches, then Histon Baptist Church will be holding a traditional Family Nativity service. 'Messy Church' – a gathering based on creativity, hospitality and celebration – will meet at the Salvation Army for the first time.

St Andrew's in both Impington and Histon will hold their Christingle services on Christmas Eve. Symbolising the world and the love of God, Christingles are oranges wrapped in red tape, decorated with dried fruit or sweets, with a candle on the top. They are thought to be based on traditions at a Moravian Church in Germany in the 18th century. They were introduced in the Church of England in the 1960s, instigated by The Children's Society – and the children love them.

On the day

Late on Christmas Eve, St Andrew's Histon and Histon Methodist church will celebrate the start

of Christmas Day by sharing bread and wine in a Holy Communion service.

Christmas Day itself will see St Andrew's Impington hold a Holy Communion service, and Histon Methodist church and the Salvation Army will join forces for a combined Morning Service. Histon Baptist church will hold a family service for all ages; and the congregation at St Andrew's Histon will gather for their Christmas Cracker service, all ready to groan at the vicar's annual Christmas cracker joke.

One thing is certain. This village provides something for everyone who, amid the fun, laughter and chaos of other Christmas-time celebrations, might like to pause for a short while to consider why we celebrate Christmas at all. *See the Countdown to Christmas pages 5-7 for the times of church services.*



jeffweese on VisualHunt




Christingle services are on Christmas Eve

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A tale of Christmases past



Merrington Christmas in 1910

Merry-go-round on the site of Christmas corner



The site of the Christmas family home today

Wendy Doyle tells Lucy Callington why Christmas comes every day in her corner of Histon.

With so many of our streets named after notable past villagers – from Chivers to Woodcock, Dwyer Joyce to Henry Morris – reminders of our recent history abound on the streets of Histon and Impington. The names of other former residents are less well-known, but have nonetheless left their mark. For example, the Christmas family lived and worked for over a century in the area beside the war memorial, at the junction where Station Road meets Bridge Road and Saffron Road – known locally as ‘Christmas Corner’.

It’s a moniker that encompasses Wendy Doyle’s house on Station Road, the bridge over the stream alongside it – known as Christmas Bridge – and her next-door-neighbour’s house, still aptly called Christmas Barn. This festive association stems from around 1840 until 1948, when the site in Histon was occupied by several generations of Christmases.

Wendy is well placed to tell the story. Involved with the Village Society for 20 years, and now Secretary, she has always been an avid historian and researcher: “My own family is from the Midlands, but I moved to Histon in 1987, so it was great to have an interesting family to research literally on my doorstep” she says.

‘Merry’ Christmas

The first person with the surname Christmas that Wendy came across was Richard, born in 1814. Censuses records suggest he was born locally and reveal that he was married to a Sarah Phillips. The pair went on to baptise

eight children in Histon.

“The 1841 census shows the Christmases living with their first two children at ‘Cambridge End, next Impington,’ which is a fair description of the site of my house!” says Wendy. “It is exactly at the boundary between Histon and Impington, which runs along the middle of the road beside the War Memorial Green.”

She discovered that, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Christmases were an influential family in the villages, working locally as carpenters, jobbing builders and also undertakers. Then in 1845, things took an even more festive turn when Richard and Sarah had another son and named him Merrington Christmas – or possibly Merry for short. Merrington was apprenticed to his father as a carpenter but also appears as a builder and a publican in later censuses. The baptism certificate of one of his children shows that he also ran the Rose and Crown pub for a time.

After marrying Eliza Rowell in 1868, Merrington had five children including Merrington Junior. According to Wendy’s research, Merrington Junior became a butcher and moved to a house in Saffron Road – directly opposite Christmas Corner: “Incredibly he married someone called Mary Jane White in 1900, meaning that he could legitimately have been known as Merry White Christmas!” laughs Wendy.

Next generation

“Records from 1902 show that Merrington Senior was just the tenant on the corner site on which my house and two neighbouring houses stand” she explains, “but by 1920 we

know the land was sold to two of his children, Ted and Lois, after they raised a mortgage for £300 from Charles Love, the Histon butcher, and another of those village characters with a street named after them – Love’s Close.”

Ted and his father Merrington worked together as builders and carpenters, based at the Christmas corner site, until the latter’s death in 1934. Ted was reputedly a colourful character, remembered by some of the older people in the village for keeping a pet magpie in a cage.

The family had a very strong connection with the Romany and fairground communities. “I have a photo of them building a merry-go-round in the area where my kitchen now stands!” says Wendy.

End of an era

With Ted’s death in 1948, a century of the Christmas family’s connection with this land at the heart of Histon & Impington ended, and the plot was bequeathed to members of the extended family, their spouses and a housekeeper.

The three modern houses now on the site of Christmas corner were built in the late 60s and early 70s, changing the character of the site completely. But, as Wendy says, there is always more digging to be done: “Apparently the remains of the foundations for the original house are under our garden, and there is supposed to be a listed wall of some age and historical interest here too, but we haven’t yet managed to identify it.”

It seems there is more Christmas past still to be unearthed.



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Community in action

A Christmas less ordinary

Across our community, the festive season is celebrated in many different ways. Amanda Borrill talks to three local residents for whom tradition takes a seasonal twist.

What makes for a happy Christmas? Perhaps you are true to tradition with your lights and decs up even before December hits. Or maybe your idea of bliss is a sun-drenched beach, as far away as you can get from the seasonal excesses.

Ring out those bells

Advertising campaigns love to tell us what we need to make our Christmas celebrations the biggest and the best, but the trappings of a commercial Christmas are of no interest at all for Impington resident and well-known TV 'weather watcher' photographer, Geoff Grayton. For him a special Christmas involves coming together with others to ring the bells at St Andrews Histon.

"Not all bell ringers are religious, including myself, but ringing the bells is a service to the church and community" he said. "It announces the services and other events, and is the most public of musical instruments. It also reassures people that the church is available."



So how about the big day itself? "I see it as a time for reflection" he explained. "I may ring the church bells and attend a service, and I will join some of my own relatives if

invited, but I'm equally happy to be on my own. Depending on my mood I may prepare 'Christmas food' or I may just treat it as an ordinary day."

I love Christmas TV and it's still the one time a year I buy a copy of the Radio Times. Geoff, though, is rather more

selective in his consumption, choosing to dedicate his viewing time to that long-standing tradition, the Monarch's Christmas message which, he proudly confesses, "I feel a duty to watch".

A hospitable welcome

For the hospitality industry, it is all systems go at Christmas, with the festive season being its busiest time of the year. Histon's Red Lion is no exception and Assistant Manager Oliver Harvey will spend his Christmas Day pulling pints rather than crackers!

"Christmas is certainly my favourite time of the year", he told me. "Working in hospitality is great as you get to see lots of new faces and, to be honest, the tips aren't too bad either!"

While the rest of us open our presents,



Oliver will be opening up the pub. Tradition demands that it opens for a couple of hours on Christmas Day and he will be there behind the bar – complete with Santa hat and a welcoming smile.

So when the doors close and he gets home, what's on the menu? "Beef, lots of it!", he exclaims. "Extra gravy, pigs in blankets and plenty of yorkies. And to keep my mum happy I'll stick a couple of sprouts on there to cover the greenery

aspect. Then, feet up for that absolute classic" he laughs, "Home Alone."

A sense of belonging

Stepping away from routine and coming together with their community



is what makes Christmas special for Histon resident Premalatha and her family Balan, Avni and Aaron. "Histon and Impington evoke memories of the village I grew up in, and the church services are reminiscent of the temple visits I used to make with my family on festive days", reflects Premalatha. "In my childhood, every festival revolved around the community rather than individual families – though this was different from what I observed in the cities in India, where people typically celebrated festivals within the confines of their own homes.

"In the village here, there are numerous community events that create lasting memories for the children as they grow up. Our visits to Santa's Grotto at the Crossing Keeper's Hut when our children were younger were truly magical experiences, and we derive great joy from attending the carols on the village green."

"Such events bring people together and foster a sense of belonging" she said. "In our case, it is not about religion - the community coming together in a joyful mood is what we truly relish."

Their traditions are flexible. Many are ones they have adopted over the years, including venturing abroad because they have no other family members to host or visit.

Instead of turkey, which doesn't suit the two pescatarians and isn't a particular favourite of the two meat eaters, the family opt for fish or a vegetarian alternative. "Typically we buy what we need just the day before", Premalatha revealed. "It adds an element of surprise as we only decide the menu on Christmas Eve!"

To create a 'Christmassy' feel, festive touches are included, such as roasted potatoes and vegetables. "We love to throw a few sprouts into sambhar but apart from this we haven't found a way to make them appealing to the kids yet!"



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Feature

Who fills the pies?

As easy as pie!



Claire Sutton on VisualHunt

Mincemeat isn't minced, and it certainly isn't made of meat. So what is it and where does it come from? Liz Hill asked a few questions of local producer Hain Celestial.

Hands up if you make your own mince pies at Christmas? And keep them up if you make your own mincemeat too... I'm guessing not so many of you. This popular seasonal pie filling can be made at home, but commercial food manufacturers do the job for many of us.

One of those companies is Hain Celestial at their plant on Chivers Way, right here in Histon. A sizeable proportion of the UK's commercial bakeries will make their mince pies with mincemeat from the village 'jam factory'. The company also fills many of the jars on our supermarket shelves, ready to serve the home baker, and a small quantity will head off overseas, mainly to Canada, Australia and USA, where a few shoppers clearly have a taste for this peculiarly British Christmas treat.

Production

For much of the year Hain Celestial produces jams, marmalades, jellies and other sweet spreads. As well as producing for their own well-known brands, such as Robertson's, Frank Cooper's and Hartley's, they supply many private label products including supermarket own-brands.

However, come summer, attention turns to preparations for Christmas and these year-round products make way for intensive mincemeat production.

Robertson's mincemeat has been around since 1891 and its main ingredients won't be very different now from when it was first launched: vine fruits, citrus peel, sweetening agents (typically sugar and apple) and suet. The quantities of each remain a closely-guarded trade secret and will depend on which brand label they are producing for – but all have to exceed the minimums set out in the 'Jam and Similar Products Regulations'.

Continued on next page ►►



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Feature

Who fills the pies?

Unlike most of the Hain Celestial production lines, making mincemeat doesn't involve cooking: that happens once the mincemeat is in the pies. Rather, the ingredients are simply mixed to order in an industrial-scale mixing vessel. During the mixing, samples are taken off and tested for various quality indicators, such as acidity and consistency, then if Quality Control gives the batch the thumbs up, off it goes for packing and despatch, leaving the factory either in various sizes of glass jar, 250kg barrels or 1 tonne containers.

The good news for home bakers (less good for those trying to lose weight) is that the mincemeat they buy from the supermarket can be stored unopened in a cupboard for years and its high sugar, fat, and sometimes alcohol content means that even after opening it can be kept for six weeks or more if refrigerated. Plenty of time to bake another dozen to use up any left-overs.

Make your own mincemeat

For anyone who fancies the DIY approach to mincemeat, there are any number of recipes available online, but BBC goodfood offers a simple 5-star option. It needs to be made at least a fortnight before it's ready to fill your pies, and once bottled will keep in the fridge for up to six months.

Ingredients

- 250g raisins
- 375g currants
- 100ml brandy
- zest of 1 lemon and juice of ½
- 300g shredded suet
- 250g dark brown sugar
- 85g chopped mixed peel
- ½ small nutmeg, grated
- 1 large Bramley apple, peeled and grated

Method

Mix the brandy and lemon juice, and soak the raisins and currants in this for an hour to plump them up. Drain the dried fruits and set the brandy mixture aside.

In a bowl, mix all the ingredients together and finally mix in the brandy/lemon. Spoon the mixture into sterilised jars and press down to remove any air. Cover and keep until you're ready to bake!



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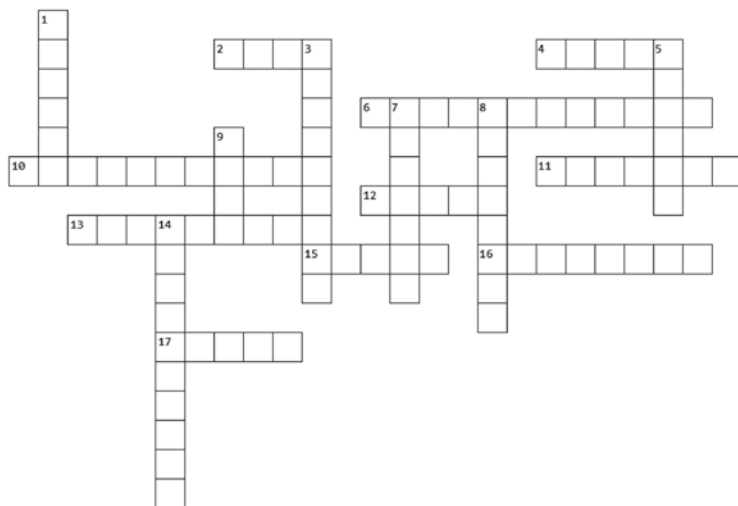


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A festive crossword for all the family



Across

2. Ingredient in mincemeat (4)
4. KFC is the most popular Christmas meal in this country (5)
6. The Nutcracker premiered here (2,10)
10. New York skyscraper famed for its Christmas tree (11)
11. Drink made from mulled cider, lemons, oranges and spices (7)
12. King's gift to Jesus (5)
13. 2017 Christmas no. 1 single artist (2,7)
15. Romantic reindeer (5)
16. Saint who became Santa (8)
17. Maids-a-milking (5)

Down

1. Poinsettia's native country (6)
3. Highest grossing Christmas movie of all time (3,6)
5. This country gifts the Trafalgar Square Christmas Tree (6)
7. Bob Cratchit's son (4,3)
8. Actor played multiple roles in 'Polar Express' (3,5)
9. Colour of Elvis's Christmas (4)
14. Chorus in Handel's Messiah (10)

Where is this?

You'll find all of these places in Histon & Impington... but where?



Sudoku

Sudoku puzzles are provided by www.sudokuoftheday.com – visit them and get a new Sudoku every day.



Ten Christmas crackers

1. Why did they let the turkey join the band?
2. How many presents can Santa fit in an empty sack?
3. Who says "Oh, Oh, Oh!"?
4. What do fish sing at Christmas?
5. Who delivers Christmas presents to dogs?
6. What's an elf's favourite type of music?
7. Why has Santa been banned from sooty chimneys?
8. Who hides in the bakery at Christmas?
9. What did Adam say the day before Christmas?
10. What does Father Christmas do when his elves misbehave?



Answers

Photo quiz

1. The Green (children's play area)
2. School Hill (shops)
3. Bell Hill
4. Station Road (crossing keeper's hut)
5. The Rec (pavilion)
6. Chivers Way (Vision Park)

Christmas Crackers

1. Because he had the drum sticks
2. Only one – after that, it's not empty any more!
3. Santa walking backwards
4. Christmas Corals
5. Santa Paws.
6. Wrap
7. Carbon footprints
8. A mince spy
9. "It's Christmas, Eve"
10. He gives them the sack

Crossword

Across:

2. suet
4. Japan
6. St Petersburg
10. Rockefeller
11. wassail
12. myrrh
13. Ed Sheeran
15. Cupid
16. Nicholas
17. eight

Down:

1. Mexico
3. The Grinch
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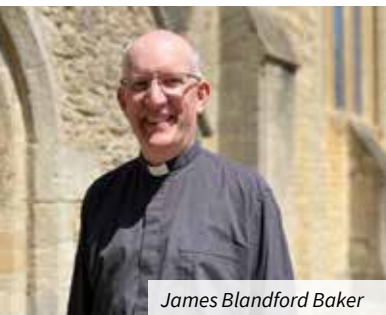
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Getting to know... James Blandford Baker



James Blandford Baker

Known to so many in the village as 'the vicar', Rev'd Canon James Blandford Baker moved to Histon in 2006 with his wife Katharine and two children (then aged 3 and 8). He took up the role of Vicar of St Andrew's Histon and Impington. "Both churches are named after St Andrew, one of the first followers of Jesus, who was a popular saint locally in the medieval period" he explained. "St Andrew's particular gift was helping people encounter Jesus, and that's my motivation too, because knowing Jesus utterly changes and transforms our lives." Katharine works in publishing and their children are now "university junkies", currently on second and third degrees. "We live in hope that they'll earn a living wage one day and enhance our care home prospects" he joked. Involved in many activities in the village, these range from chairing the Histon and Impington Town Charity to serving as a Director of the St Andrew's Café and as a Member of the Meridian Trust that run some of our schools.

Guilty pleasure?

Browsing/grazing in the Apple Store. I've been an Apple fan since I bought my first computer back in 1987. Today it's embarrassing that most of the staff in the Grand Arcade store weren't even born then!

First ever job/paid work?

Mathematically modelling the way sand blows across the desert. This was university research in Aberdeen with occasional forays to Aarhus University in Denmark and field trips to the dunes of Jutland.

Artistic talents?

Designing and making furniture—my main hobby. But really I'm a maker much more than a designer so if there's anyone out there who's got some design ideas do get in touch...

Which superpower would you like?

Teleportation: I'm a big Star Trek fan; it would reduce my carbon footprint; and going to bed when you're too tired to climb the stairs would be a doddle.

Best holiday ever?

Israel and the West Bank in 1992. I drove the group minibus. We got stoned in the West Bank, drove over a Molotov cocktail in Hebron and the buses got burnt out one night in Jerusalem. We did a 'fire drill' (everyone runs once round the minibus and gets back in before the traffic lights change) in Nazareth. We managed it but the bemused Israeli Police in the car behind didn't move a muscle.

First car?

Ford Escort Mk2: slow, solid and fixable.

Most embarrassing moment?

Christmas 1999. My family gave me a pair of 'millennium' socks that played Auld Lang Syne when you pressed a button on the heel. I wore them two days later on a funeral visit. I accidentally hit the button while discussing the deceased with the next of kin. 'Should auld acquaintance be forgot, and never brought to mind?' blared from my ankles. When I apologised, the next of kin, deadpan and unperturbed, said, 'Oh, I thought it was your mobile phone'!

Cat or dog?

Guinea pigs (Marmalade and Toast, of happy memory)

Historic heroes?

Eric Liddell, the subject of the film, *Chariots of Fire*. We went to the same school (where his record for the 100m still stands). His service of others in the name of Jesus Christ is utterly inspirational. He died of a brain tumour in a Japanese internment camp in China in 1944. Amazingly, one of my recent curates in Histon had a godmother who was interned in the same camp and knew him.

How your partner/friends would describe you?

Well, I asked my team. The one thing they all agreed on was I was given to 'losing it' in a fit of giggles.

Beer or wine?

Neither – I don't drink – but a stiff ginger beer is always welcome!

Favourite ever shoes?

I hate shoes, especially buying them, so I only shop for them every 20 years.

Most unappealing habit?

Being bad tempered when shopping for shoes.

Favourite band?

Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields with Neville Mariner: above reproach.

Film or theatre or TV?

Probably TV. A good series is a joy (except when it's finished). *Brideshead Revisited* with Jeremy Irons and, more recently, *Detectorists* are favourites.

What last made you angry?

A misplaced apostrophe (a niche annoyance!).

Actor to play you in a film of your life?

Patrick Stewart—my son genuinely used to think I was Jean-Luc Picard.

Most successful sporting moment?

Riding the Oxford to Cambridge Bike Ride with a fantastic group of friends in aid of the British Heart Foundation when I turned 50 and was given a road bike for my birthday. I could barely walk for a week afterwards but it was a wonderful sense of achievement for a great cause.

Best thing about Histon & Impington?

Carols by Candlelight at Christmas – it is magical.

Worst thing about Histon & Impington?

Closure of the Bike Shop on the High Street.



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